

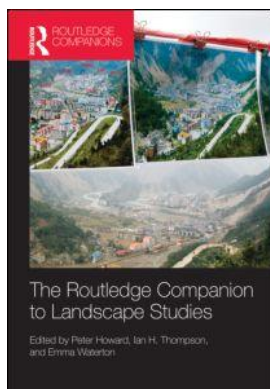
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Landscape studies and tourism research

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J. B. Jackson wrote about his travels through Europe:

It was, to be sure, a cautious, uneventful, and at times a fatiguing and solitary way of passing a summer vacation: tramping out to admire Baedeker's list of three-star monuments, conscientiously sampling the local food, taking lessons in conversational French or German or Italian, and always trying not to resemble a tourist. But as I look back on many summers of such European travel I wonder if they were not in fact an excellent introduction to the different phase of tourism that I have learned to call landscape studies.

(Jackson 1980: 9)

His observations should come as no surprise to those who study landscape, nor still to those who study tourism. It is a fascination with places that are unique, places which seem to offer a peek into a world other than one's own that drive the tourist as well as the scholar of place, and, as Jackson did, those skills of observation and engagement with these exotic sites help hone the tools that can then be brought to bear on the places in our own backyard. With the spread of landscape as a topic of intellectual inquiry far beyond the realm of geography in the last several decades of the twentieth century, it is not surprising that the term has found resonance among tourism researchers (Aitchison et al. 2001; Ringer 2002; Cartier and Lew 2005; Knudsen et al. 2008). Tourism sites are place bound and this de facto entails that those involved, from researchers and planners to the tourists themselves, pay attention to the uniqueness of place, and hence landscape.

The origin of modern tourism can be located in the opening up of the spaces of the Grand Tour to the mass tourists, attracted by the offerings of Thomas Cook. Nineteenth-century literature is rife with passages that demonstrate the importance that the landscape, understood broadly to include the natural elements as well as the built environment, held. But it is landscape that is multifaceted, at once an object, an idea, a representation, and an experience. E.M. Forster, early in *A Room with a View*, writes:

Tears of indignation came to Lucy's eyes partly because Miss Lavish had jilted her, partly because she had taken her Baedeker. How could she find her way home? How could she find her way about in Santa Croce? Her first morning was ruined, and she might never be in Florence again. A few minutes ago she had been all high spirits, talking as a woman of culture, and half persuading herself that she was full of originality. Now she entered the church depressed and humiliated, not even able to remember whether it was built by the Franciscans or the Dominicans. Of course, it must be a wonderful building. But how like a barn! And how very cold! Of course, it contained frescoes by Giotto, in the presence of whose tactile values she was capable of feeling what was proper. But who was to tell her which they were? She walked about disdainfully, unwilling to be enthusiastic over monuments of uncertain authorship or date. There was no one even to tell her which, of all the sepulchral slabs that paved the nave and transepts, was the one that was really beautiful, the one that had been most praised by Mr. Ruskin.

(Forster 1995 [1908]: 29)

In this brief excerpt we can see much of what engages tourism studies with landscape. The very notion of Florence engenders symbolic meaning going beyond the mere artifacts that make up the city, but these meanings do not emerge simply from the city itself, the city as a thing, but are fostered and nurtured by the numerous representations of the city which shape its symbolic meaning. And yet, even lacking the guide which will illuminate this particular object of the city, the material manifestation of this place which Lucy Honeychurch is faced with still elicits feelings and emotions of embodied experience. Cold, and despair, override the feelings of awe she has been conditioned to expect based upon the representation and the idea. Touring is, in the end, the intersection of the material, the ideal and the experiential landscape. Thus, taking this as our guide, let us look at the way in which tourism research has considered landscape as, one, a material object, physically manifest and created, two, as an idea and representation, endowed with symbolism and meaning, and, lastly, as an experience, especially in the requirements for performing tourism. But of course the line between these three approaches is less hard and fast.

Landscape as object in tourism

As the scope of what constitutes touring has expanded, the objects of interest have as well. The beach resort, the mountains, the city, the farm have all become destinations but so too have factories, wharfs, and mines (MacCannell 1976; Young and Kaczmarek 2008; William 2005; Williams 2009). Lew (1991: 126) asserts that if the essential elements – tourist, site and marker – are present, “virtually anything can become a tourist attraction.” From heritage to “kitsch,” from tragedy to the general oddity, all can be found on tourist itineraries (Prentice 1994; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Pohlen 2002; Foote 2003). Tourism sites are creations carefully nurtured and developed in order to become destinations. In some cases, this requires a great deal of exertion, for example in the efforts of small towns to supplant their stagnant economies

with the promotion of a native son or daughter, or a local festival (Koth 1993; see also Lane 2009). In other cases, the given landscape does much of the work, think white sandy beaches, or sublime mountain peaks, but even here there is need for careful development in order to ensure that the physical resources are managed (Butler 1980).

Commodification of place often trades on the notion of heritage. But as Ashworth and Tunbridge (2000) note, this harkening to the past can entail a search for best-practices, the result being rather an elision of the unique, and a homogenization of place. The result is a proliferation of festival marketplaces, hip gentrified shopping districts, converted working wharfs and beautified historical city centers, requiring expected heritage items, including cobblestones, “gas” lights, and wrought iron benches. Along with the heritagization of places, there has been a rise in heritage centers, open air and living museums (Aitchison et al. 2001). These places sometimes mark an actual historic site or event, Colonial Williamsburg or Plymouth Plantation for example, but sometimes they elide history and fiction or even recall an entirely fictional (i.e. based in literature) past, such as Cannery Row (Norkunas 1993), the Ramona Trail (DeLyser 2005) in California, or Santa Claus in Finland (Pretes 1995).

But of course much tourism takes place not in heritage parks and museums, or even enclavic resorts, but in towns and cities, places which serve a multitude of activities, only one of which is tourism. Although Selby (2004: 125) contends that “there are relatively few contemporary studies of urban tourism which use an experiential approach concerned with the knowledge, meanings, emotions and memories of urban tourists or residents,” a number of scholars have been filling in the lacuna to look at what happens in urban space when residents and tourists interact. Maitland and Newman (2008) make the argument that gentrification in central London has created not so much a space given over to the outsider but a sense of conviviality shared by the resident and the visitor in creating livable urban space. Other scholars have described these locales as “heterogeneous spaces” (Edensor 2000) or “touristed landscapes” (Cartier and Lew 2005), places which are frequented by tourists but which in the end are lived spaces which support many other functions. Metro-Roland (2011: 38) talks about the tourist-prosaic as a middle space “between the everyday of the cityscape and the festive nature of the touristscape,” a space which includes both heritage sites such as museums frequented by residents and visitors as well as the everyday spaces of tourism, such as the souvenir stands, and the quotidian spaces of the city, including parks and busy streets which tourists find of interest.

Landscape as idea and image in tourism

While the landscapes that constitute the sites of tourism are materially constructed from both the natural and the built environment, they are also ideas, symbolically constructed to convey values, concepts and meanings. Part and parcel of this process are the images or representations of landscape – in both words and pictures – that support the construction of destinations (as noted above) and the construction of the act of touring (as we will see below). The tourism literature treats the landscape as symbol as well as representation in a number of different ways but one of the common factors is the notion of reading the landscape, and the focus on the ocular, as opposed to what we will see in the next section with studies that move towards non-representational theory.

Tourism studies is both relatively young and interdisciplinary as a field of study. Much of the work originates outside of geography but nevertheless adopts geographic notions of landscape as one can see in two of the foundational texts of tourism studies, Dean MacCannell’s (1976) *The Tourist* and John Urry’s (1990) *The Tourist Gaze*. Both treat the spaces of tourism in ways that

result in visual consumption, relying heavily on sight and image to understand just what makes a site an object of interest. In other words, both are concerned with the representational qualities of landscapes. Urry (1990), using Foucault's theory of discourse as structuring knowledge, suggests that what tourists do is "gaze." The romantic gaze is that which should be performed in solitude, for example gazing at an old master painting or a sublime sunset; it is compromised by the presence of other unwanted gazers. The collective gaze, on the other hand, depends upon a group of fellow travelers, the seaside English resort being the archetypal example. These gazes are given shape by the structural expectations of the tourist industry, which is in turn organized to satisfy the gaze of the tourists.

MacCannell (1976), returning to an earlier set of ideas about tourists (see Enzensberger 1996), employs the figure of the tourist in order to speak about the condition of modern man, attempting to escape the faux wood paneling and the alienation engendered by work. Ironically, the worksites of others become attractions, though what marks something as worthy of attention is the process of signifying. The tourist is a sightseer, looking at things which portray themselves as other things, and things that represent things. Thus the hill upon which the Bonnie and Clyde shootout took place is unique from other hills only by marking it as such, and the worksite is a tourist site because it is marked as being of interest. Representations of places, both through on-site and off-site markers (guidebooks, travel literature, advertising campaigns) give meaning to the spaces under consideration.

As can be surmised from the above, tourism sites are seen as more than the sum of their constituent elements and they are given shape by a whole set of ideas about what tourism is, creating spaces that have been seen to function as a repository of metonymic and metaphoric meanings. Images of tourism destinations found in brochures and other media help to create mythic notions about place (Selwyn 1996). For example, Hopkins (1998) shows how the myth of the "rural" is marshaled in promotional materials from diverse sources to shape the experience of rural tourism. As Davis (2005) shows, the manipulation of mythic notions about place can impact the uses and abuses of landscape in, for example, Bikini Atoll and the recent attempt to replace the nuclear experiments of the 1950s with the myth of island paradise.

In addition to the material objects and the ideas which give them meaning, tourism landscapes, like all landscapes, are heavily dependent upon the supporting structures of ideas which shape them as destinations (Meinig 1979; Cosgrove 1984; Groth and Bressi 1997; Morgan and Pritchard 1998). The heritage site and its manifestation in the form of museum (indoor, outdoor or both) offers another way to see the intersection of the idea of place with actual space. Especially in the industrialized world there is a tendency to create collections of the past—buildings, tools, and other accoutrements—sometimes in reproduced/reconstructed spaces that create a sense of place, while perhaps eliding historical authenticity. As Young (2006: 323) argues of villages that never were, the genre (of the historical village) "lives with and off a popular image of old-world charm." These sites demonstrate a tension between the local/particular and the national/general in presenting their stories so that "a shorthand ... can be employed by the designers of rural heritage sites ... that is also brought to bear by tourists when they visit" (Metro-Roland 2009: 146). Garden (2006) proposed the conceptual framework of the "heritagescape" drawing explicitly from landscape studies in order to give coherence to a set of disparate sites that have in common the presentation and preservation of heritage, sites which are delineated as such and hence are recognized as such, even if they differ in what they are depicting. The underlying argument is that these sites are a genre, marked off as places of interest just like the festival marketplaces and gentrified tourist precincts in urban areas.

Landscape as experience in tourism

Just as in landscape studies in general, so too tourism studies has witnessed a shift toward non-representational theory as a way in to understand how tourists perform tourism and by extension tourism spaces. Della Dora (2009) takes the very fundamental concept of landscape image but focuses upon the materiality of these, as objects, and looks to what these objects do, other than to just sit and look pretty. She writes:

I will call [these] “travelling landscape-objects”: portable graphic images embedded in different material supports that physically move through space and time, and thus operate as vehicles for the circulation of places; worlds in miniature visually and physically possessed by the beholder and yet able to exercise their own agency.

(Della Dora 2009: 335)

The apparatus of tourism, postcards, photographs, guidebook images and souvenirs can all be viewed in this light.

The photographic products of the tour are highly dependent upon the interaction with tourism landscapes, and with moving beyond viewing to doing. The photograph gives proof that one was there, and then functions as a souvenir of the experience. But part of the being there is capturing the *de rigueur* image, the one seen in a thousand places with a thousand different people, for example the tourist next to the Beefeater in front of Buckingham Palace. Jenkins (2003) highlights this re-enacting of images they have seen before in the “circle of representation” illustrating the discourse of being a tourist enacted in the process of capturing the tourist experience in the photograph. So too Larsen (2005) highlights the importance of “performing” as a tourist within the photographic record, and therefore moving beyond the representational of tourism imagery to the *non*-representational (see Chapters 5 and 10).

Dewsbury et al. (2002) point out that non-representational approaches are not *anti*-representational, but instead are intended to push beyond examinations of representations, to be “more-than representational” (see also Lorimer 2005). The relationship between these earlier representational notions of landscape and the non-representational concepts in tourism studies is characterized by an increasing emphasis on investigating the ways in which tourists and tourism spaces interact. In response to the spurious accusations that landscapes have been seen as inert, meaning fully embedded in situ to be read and interpreted, the spaces of tourism have come to be seen as products created through the interaction of place and participant (Crouch 2002; Edensor 2000, 2001; Coleman and Crang 2002; Bærenholdt et al. 2004). Obrador Pons (2003: 52) writes: “Identifying tourism as a way of being-in-the-world means, therefore, giving priority to embodied practices before consciousness or structure ... It is because we are doing something in a particular way that we are tourists and we adopt tourist consciousness.”

Rather than meaning being pulled out of place, places are experienced in a much more constructivist manner, so that embodied actions shape the meaning of the physical world. Terkenli (2002: 203) employs theoretical notions of attraction and seduction to explore the embodied experiences of landscape. Tourists, she contends, develop “bodily/sensual, emotional and cognitive relationships” with the places in which they tour. In moving away from the ocularcentric approaches in both tourism studies and landscape, writers have focused on the other senses and the role these play in our interactions with landscape. Porteus’s (1985) work on smellscape influenced Dann and Jacobsen’s (2002, 2003) investigations of the tourist smellscape. Ironically this later investigation, while dealing with embodied experiences of landscape, is grounded in literary representations of touring. But Porteus’s argument turns on the ability of

olfactory sensations to elicit memory. Chronis (2006: 283) makes a similar argument about our understanding of landscape noting that, “the sensory understanding and the emotional response brought about by objects links directly the narrative of the past with the human body in its present actuality.” Thus while Jenkins’s (2003) enacting of iconic images through photography helps tourists perform as such, the sensual experiences of being in place also operate in multiple directions, allowing for us to bring experiences from our past to our touring and to bring those touring moments back to our futures. Kruse (2005) illustrates these processes in regard to the music of the Beatles and the experience of the Liverpool landscape (see also Gibson and Connell 2004). Food also functions in this manner and that tourists eat as well as gaze has begun to receive attention (Hall and Sharples 2003). Food “provid[es] an embodied experience of place, perhaps more powerfully than many other commodities” argues Everett (2008: 341) in considering tourist tastespaces.

Non-representational approaches understand landscape not as an “inert background or setting for human action, nor is it understood as simply a pictorial or discursive form” (Macpherson 2010: 6), but as “perception in motion” (Wylie 2007). Thus, the tourism landscape is the culmination of its physicality, perception, and experience. Belhassen et al. (2008) illustrate this complexity in their study of Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land. They find that landscape experience is a result of the collective journey, shared meanings associated with the place, and the actuality of historic locations in which they move about (see also Buchmann et al. 2010).

Tourism can be seen as a performative act influenced by the the expectations inherent in what it means to be on tour. As Edensor (2001) writes:

particular tourist contexts generate a shared set of conventions about what should be seen, what should be done and which actions are inappropriate. Such shared norms instantiate a way of being a backpacker, a participant on a tour-bus or a member of a Club 18–30 holiday. Thus forms of tourist habitus are also determined by unreflexive, embodied, shared assumptions about appropriate behaviour in particular contexts.

(Edensor 2001: 60)

Key to this line of thinking is that tourists often occupy spaces that are also used by locals. Residents and even workers in enclavic spots have different sets of behaviours and expectations even within the same context of place. Minca and Oakes’ (2006) self-exploratory essays about their trip to Venice highlight the differences of being host and guest, even in the context of the tourist landscape. As Oakes writes, the idea of “this is what Italians do” is used to explain the things that Minca shows (Minca and Oakes 2006: 3). And while both writers eschew the notion of authenticity, of discovering a “real” Venice, by traveling to “alleys where tourists are seldom seen, where laundry hangs and where façades need rebuilding,” the question of difference in these spaces still emerges. Minca is working, stopping to give a radio interview, and it is his home, whereas even the trips off the beaten path still do not make Oakes a local, even if he does eat his croissant standing up just exactly as the Italians do.

Conclusion

The role of landscape in tourism studies can thus be seen to parallel the evolution of theoretical approaches to landscape in general, that is, the movement from landscapes as objects, to representations, to places co-created by the material and the experiential. As we have tried to make clear above, though, the lines that separate these approaches are rather fuzzy, reflecting the

reality that landscapes and our interactions with them are complex, no more so when we are at leisure than when we are at home moving through the spaces which are well known to us. As Jackson (1980) observed, the investigative and questioning nature of the researcher mirrors that of the curious tourist, keen on seeing all that makes a place unique.

In looking toward the future of landscape tourism research, there are several areas for which more attention would benefit our understanding. In looking at the ways in which tourism landscapes are crafted and defined, there has been little attention to the so called “linguistic landscape”, that constituted by the material manifestations of language in place, including notices, street names, shop signs, adverts, graffiti etc. (Shohamy and Gorter 2009). This raises questions about power, cultural continuity, the role of indigenous versus world languages, especially English, and the choices made about the presentation of the cultural heritage of minority groups. This is linked closely to the need to consider more fully the material aspects of representation. Within tourism, the guidebook has materiality and plays a role both in shaping experience and in performing as tourist, and the images that are taken back in the form of postcards and souvenirs do more than simply represent. While the writing of Della Dora (2009) has begun the conversation more work is necessary.

The materiality of landscapes in general and the bringing to bear of research from the field of material culture to tourism sites is another fruitful avenue. In particular, while much research has been focused on the large-scale symbolic sites that consume the interest of tourists (Edensor 1998), within the theoretical literature there has been less attention on the materiality of the mundane aspects of destinations, both rural and urban (Rickly-Boyd and Metro-Roland 2010), not to mention the mundane aspects of touring, such as eating and moving through space, and how these are constituted as different than what occurs on a daily basis when at home (see Larsen 2008).

The shift toward non-representational theory and the emphasis on sensual encounters with landscape has made a very good start. More attention to emotion, and a continued emphasis on the applied aspects of non-representational theory, would be a welcome addition to the literature. Dann and Jacobsen’s (2003) use of travel narratives to explore the smellscape might be applied to informal travel writing on travel websites and blogs, but it would also be useful to engage in fieldwork with actual tourists while on site to gauge their understandings of their sensual engagement with tourism landscapes. Of equal interest would be understanding the ways in which these sensual experiences are recalled and shape the narrative of the experience once back home (see Sather-Wagstaff 2008; Rickly-Boyd 2010). Lastly, the notion of performing as a tourist in tourism spaces offers important insights into the ways in which landscapes are co-created. The literature would be enriched by empirical investigations with actual tourists in order to understand the ways in which they recognize the performative aspects of their visits.

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